Unreported Insights From Kennan's Testimony, Pps. 2-3

Just Little Old Lyndon B. Jefferson—Till You Dare to Question His War

"One man alone within his conscience—whether in the laboratory or the study or the classroom or on the street corner—is to be jealously guarded from the thousand who, believing him wrong, would deny his right to search and his right to speak the truth."

—LBJ awarding medals to 11 scientists, Feb. 10

I. F. Stone's Weekly

VOL. XIV, NO. 7 FEBRUARY 21, 1966 WASHINGTON, D. C. 15 CENTS

The Counterfeit Language of A Counterfeit Cause

When the Axis forces were driven out of Occupied Europe, and the Japanese out of Occupied Asia, no one worried about "winning" and "pacifying" the people. The defeat of their oppressors was enough to bring them into the streets cheering. This would also be the case in Vietnam if our government's propaganda line were true. If South Vietnam's people were the victims of a foreign invasion, if the Viet Cong were a mere tool of that invading Northern power, if they held the peasantry only by fear and terror, there would be no need to worry about winning the people. The only "pacification" program necessary would be military victory. There would be no need to woo the South Vietnamese with promises of social reform if they were suffering under a foreign yoke. If the Viet Cong were foreign oppressors, all we would have to do is drive them out.

Fooling Them and Fooling Ourselves

The Honolulu conference and the Humphrey tour are only fresh strands in an old web of falsehood. The weaving, like the war, began under the French. One reason an old Vietnam hand like Mansfield is so appalled is because he remembers how he himself was taken in. Just six months before Dienbienphu, Mansfield returned with the first of his Senate missions to report, "The military prospects of the non-Communist forces in Indo-China are improving." The French military then, like ours now, were exulting in body count. Gen. Cogny announced triumphantly that a search-and-destroy mission had killed 4,000 guerrillas and put the crack 320th division of the Viet Minh out of action. That was more than 12 years ago and we, like the French, are still winning in the headlines. This is as true in the field of "civic action" as of the purely military. The language out of Honolulu was once heard, too, from the French. In Lucien Bodard's *L'Humiliation* we hear the French General Chanson talking in 1950 of the need to wage "a people's war" and saying "We must conquer the farmers by their hearts." It's still hashish because we, like the French, have allied ourselves with the landlords, the compradores and the native profiteers. Any real social reform would seem to our only allies hardly worse than a Viet Cong victory. They'll fight to our last dollar, and then flee with it to the Riviera.

Every key word—whether pacification or democracy or revolution—has had to be given a counterfeit meaning to suit the real character of the forces with which we are allied. Ky in the Declaration of Honolulu promised "a genuine social revolution." So did Diem. He launched a National Revolutionary Movement as early as October 1954. Ky promised democracy. So did Diem. He had Brother Nhu launch a Personalist Labor Revolutionary Party dedicated to realizing "democracy at the level where people are fighting and working." That was in 1956—the year he also abolished election of village chiefs and set up concentration camps for political opponents. After four years of such model revolutionary democratic innovations, the regime was in such trouble that Kennedy had to rush Johnson out there to bolster Diem and promise him more "military advisers" to deal with the growing unrest. That's when Johnson—in the overstatement of the century—called Diem "the Churchill of Asia." (To match that we suppose Humphrey will soon be calling Ky the Napoleon of the Pacific.) The cast of characters changes but the tactics remain the same. When promises of social reform turn out to be false, the South Vietnamese ruling clique turns in new promissory notes to the U.S. Treasury. From 1955 to 1960 only 1.4% of U.S. aid to Vietnam went to help

(*Continued on Page Four*)

Open Letter to the Soviet Embassy

Dear Ambassador Dobrynin:

In casting about for some way effectively to protest the Sinyavsky-Daniel trial, I decided the best way to have an impact on Moscow and to reach the grapevine of the new youth in Russia would be publicly to inform you that I am boycotting all functions at the Soviet Embassy until these writers are free. The trial disturbed all who remember the many writers liquidated under Stalin, and feel deeply the need to fight every regression toward that ugly past. We had been told labor camps had been abolished; now we learn that four different varieties are in operation and that the two writers have been sent to a "strict regime" camp for hardened criminals. The use in this trial of Article 70 of the Russian criminal code, which deals with "anti-Soviet propaganda," recalls the way the equally vague provisions about "counter-revolutionary crime" were used under Stalin against the best in your society while tale-bearers flourished. The barring of the court to foreign newsmen and to friends and relatives of the accused made a farce of the claim that the trial was open. And the conduct outside the courtroom of Komsomol toughs recalled the part the Komsomol played in hounding Pasternak. This fine flower of your party youth resembles the Fascistic vigilantes with which progressives have sometimes had to contend in this country. *—I. F. Stone*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Unreported Insights from the Senate's Vietnam Hearings . . .

KENNAN: We must not assume any Communist faction that comes into power anywhere in the world will function simply as the spineless executor of the orders of one of the great Communist powers . . . It is not so that when men call themselves Communists some sort of magic transformation takes place within them which makes them wholly different from other human beings or from what they were before. Feelings of nationalism, ordinary feelings still affect them to a large extent . . .

The effect of the Vietnamese crisis, conflict, is not to restore the unity between the Soviet Union and Communist China. I think things have gone too far for that. But it is to give their rivalry a form very undesirable from the standpoint of our interests and the interests of world peace, namely the form of a contest to see who can look the most anti-American, the most critical of our policies. Who can appear to be the most violent defender of what they call the National liberation movements . . .

What Would Kennan Do?

SEN. WILLIAMS: But had you been in a position of authority at the time what decisions do you think you would have made that were any different from those that were made?

KENNAN: No, I think probably if there was any point where we went wrong it was in putting fighting men ashore for purposes of combat . . . It has been my relief for many years, and it is a belief based on the fact that at one time I had to make a very careful study of our difficulties in connection with the intervention in Russia in 1918, it has been my belief that one should be very, very careful about our putting American forces ashore into a situation of this sort unless one can see clearly how and at (one) point one can get them out again.

SEN. WILLIAMS: Now, my next question is, recognizing that we are at this point, we do have a couple of hundred thousand men in there, what would you recommend that we do now?

KENNAN: I would recommend that we do not expand either our own commitment of men and resources to this conflict. That we try to limit the conflict rather than expand it, that we adopt in general a defense strategy and put ourselves in a position where we cannot be hurried, where we cannot be panicked, where we can afford to wait and let the logic of this situation then gradually sink in on our opponent, and I think then there is a possibility that with a little greater patience than we have shown thus far, possibilities for an acceptable resolution of the conflict may turn up. . . .

If We Guessed That Wrong In Business

"If I were a businessman and looking at a potential market and found such miscalculation [as in Vietnam], I would have to do something about it. I would not long survive."

—Gen. Gavin testifying, Feb. 8

When Tito (Like Ho) Was Our Enemy

"I have good reason to believe that Ho Chi Minh would resist the Chinese as much as he resists the Russians. The present chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was a Colonel commanding the troops in Trieste [in 1946] when we were having serious trouble there. I was Chief of Staff at Naples at the time. We had a plane shot down. Our outposts were being attacked. The man [Mihailovitch] we supported in World War II was court martialled and assassinated by Tito, and people were up in arms wanting to attack Tito.

"I think that the best thing we ever did was allow that government to come into being and demonstrate this man could bring in being an independent government of his own free of Stalin, and defying him. I am not at all satisfied that Ho Chi Minh might come to that and it would be a good government. No one has demonstrated to me that this is not so."

—Gen. Gavin testifying Feb. 8

SEN. CHURCH: Now, the NATO defense lines didn't stifle Communism, that is to say there are still Communist parties existing behind the NATO defense line, the largest political party in Italy is Communist, and a very formidable Communist party exists today in France, isn't that right?

KENNAN: That is correct.

SEN. CHURCH: And the reason that we don't have behind the NATO defense lines guerrilla wars in Western Europe, wars of national liberation in Western Europe, is because the economies have revived, there is internal cohesion, there is strong majority support for democratic institutions in these countries, isn't that the reason that Communism has not come to prevail behind the NATO defense line in Western Europe?

KENNAN: Absolutely . . .

SEN. CHURCH: . . . We failed to take into account how very different the underlying situation was in Asia and in Africa the ex-colonial regions of the world. Would you agree with that?

KENNAN: I couldn't be more strongly in agreement . . .

A Different Enemy

SEN. CHURCH: . . . Would it be your judgment that in these areas of the world the people may be less concerned or less fearful or less opposed to Communism as such as they are to imperialism, colonialism, which they have just experienced for two centuries in which with great sacrifice and afterwards with great struggle they have finally overthrown?

KENNAN: Oh, yes. The power of these various semantic symbols is entirely different in Asia than it is in Europe . . .

SEN. CHURCH: Is there freedom as we know freedom in most of the countries of Asia and Africa today?

KENNAN: There is not, and I recall reading only two days ago an article by one of our greatest authorities in this country on Chinese culture, in which he pointed out that the Chinese language has only one word which remotely resembles our word freedom and that conveys the sense of license and rather turbulent indiscipline.

SEN. CHURCH: Who was that?

KENNAN: John Fairbanks [in New York Review of Books, Feb 17].

SEN. CHURCH: Now, in these countries which are mainly totalitarian, although we always like to include them in that phrase we use continuously—the free world—change if it is to come at all, will often have to come through violence, that is to say through revolution, rather than through the process of free elections.

Wilson's Russian Hopes

KENNAN: I am sure that this is inevitable in large parts of the world . . . free elections presuppose a certain state of mind in great masses of people. We had the same problem again in the Russian intervention. Woodrow Wilson hoped there might be some sort of elections in Russia and couldn't understand that this was a country so torn by violence, by terror, by fear, by the miserable experiences of the past that no Russian would have trusted another Russian to open the election results and read them fairly. . . .

KENNAN: *I think things will change in China, as they changed in Russia. They always do. A new generation of Chinese leaders will come. They could scarcely be worse in their attitudes toward us than the present ones, and as I look over the history of international affairs, it seems to me that the counsels of patience and restraint have been more effective as a general rule, than the counsels of violence and unleashing unlimited violence.*

Now there has been great confusion precisely in this respect about Hitler and the Nazis and no statement of this sort that you make can be without its exceptions. There are no universally valid generalizations here. There are, there can be, threats to the peace that have to be faced in the way that Hitler

Wasting Bombs and Bombers

SEN. SYMINGTON: What would you say about a pilot who would say, "I am a regular, but I do not see why I should risk it a couple of times a week bombing targets that we would not even look at in Korea, bombing empty barracks or bombing a bus. If they want us to risk our lives in a $2 million airplane, why do they not give us a meaningful target to attack?" What would be your comment?

GEN. GAVIN: I would agree with the guy that said that absolutely.

SEN. SYMINGTON: We have lost scores of pilots over North Vietnam. The figure is classified. We have also lost over a half billion dollars in planes over there."

—Senate Foreign Relations Com. Feb. 8

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

. . . Kennan Draws Some Lessons from Our Intervention in Russia

should have been faced.

But, by and large, especially when one is dealing with conflicts which threaten to develop into great world conflicts on a scale that has never been known before in history, surely it is better to exhaust the counsels of patience and restraint before one plunges . . .

If War Goes Nuclear

KENNAN: If we do not resort to nuclear weapons and merely get into a conflict between our forces and Chinese Communist forces in Southeast Asia, I should not think that the Soviet Union would intervene in any formal sense. But if nuclear weapons come to be used, I simply cannot predict the effects on world opinion, the effects on our own opinion, and the cumulative quality of such a conflict. It could lead us to anything . . . and I am afraid if it went to the bitter end probably would create a situation in which the Soviet Union would be almost forced to come out against us in the strong military way.

If that again would develop into a nuclear exchange as between the Soviet Union and ourselves, I do not know but this represents all of it, a fringe of apocalyptic dangers on which I should never like to see this country play, if you see what I mean. This is the edge of a precipice . . .

SEN. PELL: From your own experience as Ambassador to Yugoslavia. . . . Do you see any hopeful outlook from the Yugoslav experience with regard to Vietnam eventually having a unified government? . . .

KENNAN: It is an observation that ought to give us food for thought, that it was only a Communist, Tito, who succeeded really in uniting the Yugoslavs to this extent over the course of many years, and I don't know how else this can be done. Of course in the case of Germany and Korea these are very complicated situations because the interests of other great powers are extensively involved, and you don't get a fair test of the ability of the country to unite itself if these outside pressures did not exist.

No Real Secrets

SEN. MCCARTHY: . . . Would you conclude that there is likely to be a great gap between the data which the decision-makers may have, those who are close to the decision, and the information which we have or which you have?

KENNAN: Only perhaps when it comes to developments of the last 24 or 48 hours. I think anyone who wants to follow the situation attentively in the press can know most of what the government knows, which is relevant to a time space of more than the last 24 or 48 hours.

SEN. MCCARTHY: If you go back beyond 48 hours as a basis for judgment, we ought not to be frightened off by those who say "if you knew what I knew."

KENNAN: No, and if I put this disclaimer into my statement here, it is because I have had friends who profess to a specialized knowledge of Vietnam, and have shouted me down very brutally and say, "you have no right to open your mouth about it. You have never been there, and you shouldn't have any ideas about it . . ."

Not Really Aggression

KENNAN: I think the use of the word "aggression" with what we are facing in South Vietnam is confusing, I think that the present situation has so complicated a background, so much of it does result from things that have happened within South Vietnam and not outside of it, not only that, but the border between North and South Vietnam is of a curious quality. It was not meant originally to be the border between states. All these things seem to me to indicate that when one uses the terms "aggression" as—some of the people in our government have been doing it—one confuses the issue . . . I do not think we can afford to delude ourselves that the Vietcong are simply an external force or a force that would not exist if there were not external encouragements. They might not be so strong, but all accounts indicate that they were fairly strong before they had this help from the North Vietnamese.

SEN. CASE: I take it you disagree rather sharply with Under Secretary of State Ball recently in his Northwestern University speech in which he said that North Vietnam and Hanoi systematically created the Vietcong . . . and it is purely a fictitious organization created by Hanoi . . .

KENNAN: That is not the impression I have.

KENNAN: During the peace conference (1919), some of our allies persuaded Admiral Kolchak, the head of the anti-Communist forces in Siberia to sign up to a declaration of high democratic principle precisely for the purpose of getting aid out of the United States. In fact, our associates wrote the documents for him in terms that they thought would appeal to the idealistic American mind, and it had no effect. The prerequisites for this sort of thing were non-existent in Siberia at the time. Anybody who knew the situation would have told us that, and Kolchak himself was totally swept away within a year and executed . . .

Dubious of Ky

SEN FULBRIGHT: *Do you have any reason to believe that General Ky has any deep understanding of this kind of document?*

KENNAN: *Well, this is precisely what seems to me to be implausible . . .*

KENNAN: I was surprised to see a day or so ago in a column in the papers written by a friend of mine, and opposing the idea of enclaves, the statement that if we settle down to a defensive strategy there as General Gavin proposed, we could just wipe out the entire South Vietnamese force as a factor in the situation; that they would become demoralized and non-resistant as a factor in the situation overnight.

I can only say if this is true, if they are so weak a reed as this, then I would very seriously question how much we wanted to have our fate linked to these people . . . If there is any truth in the estimates of the strength and the numerical strength of the South Vietnamese forces which we read in the papers, these people have plenty of strength to defend their own position further afield in the country. It is a question of their resolve and their political basis.

A Policy Nobody Knows

SEN. LAUSCHE: What is the alternative, if you have one, to the course which our government is following?

KENNAN: I am not sure what the course is that our government is now following. If I knew what it was, if I could see it more clearly, I could speak better perhaps to the question of an alternative to it.

Resumption Under Wraps

SEN. SYMINGTON: Now that the bombing has started, it is my understanding that the target restrictions are more tight than they were when it was stopped in December.

GEN. GAVIN: It seems to be.

—Senate Foreign Relations Com. Feb. 8

The Nonsense About Prestige

CHRM. FULBRIGHT: You also think that exploit [Khrushchev's removal of the missiles from Cuba], that Russia's position in the world has been seriously damaged, that her prestige has been lost, and that today she is a non-entity in the society of nations?

GEN. GAVIN: No, no. They came through amazingly well . . .

CHRM. FULBRIGHT: Wouldn't you conclude that having suffered what I believe you thought was one of the most dramatic setbacks of a major nation, having come through in this way, that this question of prestige and face has been grossly exaggerated?

GEN. GAVIN: Yes. I would say so.

CHRM. FULBRIGHT: Even in this instance [Vietnam] that isn't the major consideration. It still comes back to the wisdom of whether one should pursue a particular course or not, and the face and prestige of the U.S. is not a major consideration. Is that correct?

GEN. GAVIN: I would say it is.

—Senate Foreign Relations Com. Feb. 8

And If We Did Defeat China?

"But I challenge any thesis that destroying the military might of red China would be in our long range interest. We would create there by military means a great power vacuum. Then we would have to go in there with hundreds of thousands of men to try and fill that vacuum which would bring us face to face with Russia along its 7000-mile frontier. If we failed to go in, then Russia herself would fill it and the threat to our security would not have been abated one iota."

—Gen. Matthew B. Ridgeway's memoirs, Soldier (Harper, 1956), as quoted by Sen. Frank Church at Senate Foreign Relations Comm. hearings, Feb. 8.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ky Not Only Admires Hitler, But Wants to Imitate His Method of Control

(*Continued from Page One*)

the farmers but when this course brought Diem close to collapse, he had no difficulty in selling Johnson and Kennedy a new bill of goods. The 11-point program of rural education, health and social reform jointly promised by Saigon and Washington on Jan. 4, 1962, reads like a carbon copy of the Honolulu Declaration. There's no sucker bigger than the one who's anxious to sell himself a bill of goods. And that in Vietnam, is us.

Pacifying Or Policifying?

Judging by experience, this new "pacification" program is liable to end up by driving more of the South Vietnamese into the arms of the Viet Cong. There has been one common feature in the various "pacification" programs of the past, from Diem's "agrovilles" and "New Life Hamlets" to our "Operation Sunrise". This has been to herd people into compounds where they can be kept under surveillance. The promised dawn of social reform has always turned into another nightmare of police repression. Ky's pacification scheme, as outlined in a Charles Mohr dispatch from Saigon to the *New York Times* Jan. 21 is very much in this pattern. The pacification teams, Mohr reveals, have been trained under *the aegis of that splendid force for democracy, our CIA.* They will begin by subjecting every villager to private interrogation to weed out suspected subversives. We may be sure few villagers will have a lawyer at hand or an open telephone to the American Civil Liberties Union. The best way for the villager to pacify his pacifiers will be to tell all he knows about his relatives and neighbors. The teams will then organize the cowed villagers into a network of organizations so as to bring them, as Mohr was told, "under some discipline and control." It's not surprising that one official confessed to Mohr, "It's a little bit totalitarian." The idea, as this official explained it, "is to tie each person to some kind of a controlled organization." We can think of a large West European country which had the misfortune to be "pacified" just this way only a few decades ago. Ky wasn't making a silly slip when he told the London *Sunday Mirror* last July 4, "People ask me who my heroes are. I have only one—Hitler." When Ky said "I admire Hitler because he pulled his country together when it was in a terrible state in the early 30s," Ky knew what he meant. For Hitler "pacified" the German people by a similar system of block surveillance, and mass organizations, all under governmental control, so that everyone was locked firmly into a giant goose-step. The New Democracy in prospect for South Vietnam looks like the Old Fascism.

We could easily disprove this, of course, by one swift step forward. We could force Ky to allow freedom of the press in South Vietnam. But what we fear is that if the gag were removed, the first agonized cry would be for neutralism and peace. And peace is not what—in this peculiar language—we mean by pacification.

Shadow of That Man Bilbo

It is one of the oldest but unfortunately truest of legal saws that circumstances alter cases. It may help to ease wounded feelings in the expulsion of Julian Bond from the Georgia legislature that one of the precedents to which the Court of Appeals resorted in upholding it was that of Senator Bilbo, the worst Negro-baiter Mississippi ever produced. When the U.S. Senate met in January, 1947, Bilbo's right to his seat on re-election was challenged by Sen. Glen H. Taylor, the Idaho Democrat soon to run for Vice President on the Wallace ticket. A majority was mustered against Bilbo on charges of corruption and on the ground that his racial views were "dangerous to the perpetuity of free government." He was forced to stand aside and later died before the motion to exclude could be voted on. The issue then as now is whether a legislature is the final judge of the "qualifications" of its own members, and whether—under separation of powers—the courts can intervene. The majority in the Bond case held that the Courts could not. But Chief Judge Tuttle in dissenting held that the situation was different in Georgia where the judiciary is given explicit power to overrule legislative acts. Judge Tuttle said Bond's opposition to the war did not fit into any of the specific reasons the Georgia constitution sets forth for disqualifying a legislator. He might win on this in the U.S. Supreme Court if reelected and again denied his seat.

We'll Be Glad to Send A Sample Copy of This Issue To A Friend — Send A Stamped Addressed Envelope

I. F. Stone's Weekly 5618 Nebraska Ave., N. W. Washington, D. C. 20015

Please renew (or enter) a sub for the enclosed $5:

Name .....

Street .....

City .....**Zone**.....**State**.....

2/21/66

For the enclosed $5 send a gift sub to:

(To) Name .....

Street .....

City .....**Zone**.....**State**.....

For $5.35 extra send I. F. Stone's *The Haunted Fifties*

Indicate if announcement wished ☐

I. F. Stone's Weekly
5618 Nebraska Ave., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20015

Second class postage paid at Washington, D. C.

NEWSPAPER

I. F. Stone's Weekly. Second Class Postage Paid at Washington, D. C. Published every Monday except in August, the last week in December and the first week in January and Bi-Weekly during July at 5618 Nebraska Ave., N.W., Washington, D. C. An independent weekly published and edited by I. F. Stone; Circulation Manager, Esther M. Stone. Subscription: $5 in the U.S.; $6 in Canada; $10 elsewhere. Air Mail rates: $15 to Europe; $20 to Israel, Asia and Africa.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED